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POPULAR FALLACIES ABOUT RUSSIA.

THE tendency of newspaper correspondence and magazine articles has been to create the impression that the Russian Empire is filled with seeds of disorder threatening insurrection and even revolution, unless immediate changes are made in its government to meet what are called the demands of the people. This literature is in the main of English origin, and is the offspring of that prejudice and hostility against Russia which, with few interruptions, have been active in England for the last hundred years. They originated indeed during the reign of the Empress Catharine II., who with all her faults—and they were few compared with those attributed to her—was the greatest and wisest female ruler who ever lived; and, singularly enough, this hostility and prejudice arose from her refusal, while we were struggling for independence, to aid Great Britain in her contest with France and Spain; or to effect for a bribe a European peace, that England, relieved from her Continental antagonists, might hurl upon our forefathers force enough to suppress their rebellion. From thence onward, Russia, her people and governments, have been through good and through evil report friends of this country, not failing to stand forth as such at a time when no other government in Europe would have mourned the dismemberment and consequent destruction of the Great Republic. We should not forget that the Emperor of Russia, who is charged with so oppressing his own people as to justify the murders and outrages

committed and threatened by the Nihilists, is the same humane and Christian monarch who in 1861, at the risk of his life and throne, liberated some forty-two millions of serfs—a grand achievement of liberty so conducted throughout his vast empire that not a drop of blood was shed in its accomplishment. We should remember also that in 1861 when Southern cannon echoed their thunders in Europe, and rulers there willingly believed them signal-notes of a dying nation, he, with an earnest sympathy entitling him to our lasting gratitude, and with a comprehensive appreciation of the value of our perpetual union, instructed his chancellor, Prince Gortchakoff, to declare to us “the deep interest with which the Emperor was observing the development of a crisis which puts in question the prosperity and even the existence of the Union”; that “for more than eighty years that it has existed the American Union owes its independence, its towering rise, and its progress, to the concord of its members, consecrated under the auspices of its illustrious founder by institutions which have been able to reconcile union with liberty. This union has been fruitful; it has exhibited to the world the spectacle of a prosperity without example in the annals of history. It would be deplorable that, after so conclusive an experience, the United States should be hurried into a breach of the solemn compact which, up to this time, has made up their power. . . .

“In spite of the diversity of their constitutions and of their interests, and perhaps even because of this diversity, Providence seems to urge them to draw closer the traditional bond which is the basis and the very condition of their political existence. In any event, the sacrifices which they might impose upon themselves to maintain it are beyond comparison with those which dissolution would bring after it. United they perfect themselves—isolated they are paralyzed. . . .

“This union is not simply in our eyes an element essential to the universal political equilibrium. It constitutes, besides, a nation, to which our august master and all Russia have pledged the most friendly interest; for the two countries, placed at the extremities of the two worlds, both in the ascending period of their development, appear called to a natural community of interests and of sympathies, of which they have already given mutual proofs to each other.”

And this communication, so full of sympathy, so suggestive of aid, closes with the assurance that, “in every event, the American

nation may count upon the most cordial sympathy, on the part of the Emperor, during the important crisis which it is passing through at present."

A ruler who could, in the face of monarchical Europe, praise republican institutions in terms so exalted, and who so plainly saw their value in developing the resources, wealth, and happiness of a nation, can not be indifferent to the welfare of his own people, nor disposed to refuse them such political advantages and liberal institutions as they are able to appreciate and enjoy. It is, therefore, but just toward him and his Government to assume that, so soon as the Russian people—the mass of whom were so lately serfs—are capable of exercising that political liberty which a representative government involves, they will be permitted to enjoy it. Indeed, I have the highest authority for saying that such is the purpose of the Imperial Government, and that, for some time past, it has been earnestly considering a plan by which, in anticipation of a more general basis of representation, a partial one may be adopted by which the great interests of all portions of the empire can be represented at St. Petersburg. It is not surprising that even the highest and most humane intelligence should doubt the wisdom of conferring upon serfs so lately liberated the right to choose representatives to assist in the government of a great empire. Nor do they desire it. The assassins who have lately signalized their unfitness for liberty, or even to live except among savages and outlaws, do not belong to the liberated class, or indeed to any one of the industrial classes of Russia. They are few in number, having no organization except for purposes of outrage and murder; no plan to change or reform the Government; no theory except to destroy, and to live without labor upon the plunder of others. Nihilism is a doctrine at which even the Kearneys, the Socialists, the Communists shudder. It proposes the destruction of all that holds even the vilest society together. Its first mission is declared by its founder to be to destroy the "lie," and "the first lie is God. When we are rid of this," says the loathsome missionary, "and are convinced that our existence and that of the surrounding world is due to the conglomeration of atoms in accordance with the laws of gravity, then and then only shall we have accomplished the first step toward liberty, and will experience less difficulty in ridding the mind of the second lie, which is *right*, invented by *might*, which makes and unmakes laws." And he declares that "when our minds are freed from the fear of a God, and from that childish respect for the fiction of *right*, all the

remaining chains which bind us, and which are called science, civilization, property, marriage, morality, and justice, will snap asunder like threads."

Such is the doctrine of the wretches who have attracted so much attention by their murders and attempts at murder, and who among the ignorant and the perverted have even secured sympathy, upon the notion that they were oppressed, and were engaged in some work of political reform.

A little reflection should convince persons of ordinary intelligence that they intend no reform. I have stated their purpose to destroy, to extirpate all religious belief, all law and its administration, the institution of marriage, and everything which the most enlightened of our race have been taught to respect and to love. When this is accomplished what will Nihilism give instead? what does it promise? Nothing, absolutely nothing but this: that when all of belief, all of law, of order, of institutions which we have inherited from the past shall be destroyed, blotted out so that every human being shall be upon an equality, but without protection of law or magistrate, and therefore the weak at the mercy of the strong and brutal, that *might* which the hideous throng of those who would create this pandemonium may see fit to exercise is to be employed by the majority in number, to establish such a government as shall repudiate God and marriage, the right of property, and of all else except the privilege of living at the mercy of the loathsome crew who are then to assume control.

I need not say to those who know anything of the character of the Russian peasant, of his respect for law, his veneration for his church, his devotion to God, that he abhors the Nihilists, their doctrines and purposes; and, among those who have been arrested and tried, he has rarely been found. Nor have outrages been instigated or committed by the laboring or industrial classes, but usually by half-educated, excitable students, who, although educated at slight expense except that borne by the Government, become impatient of religious teaching, and of all wholesome control; and by a few desperate characters who skulk from the police, poison the minds of those capable of being captivated by pernicious doctrines, and finally lead them to attempt the most terrible crimes. These wretches are sometimes aided by women paraded as belonging to respectable families and even to the nobility, but who are usually of a class to whom the doors of decent houses are never opened. It is difficult to understand how such persons can be regarded as reformers.

They do not in Russia represent the property, intelligence, or the industry of its people, and those who have studied their career must have observed that they have never proposed definite reforms, nor indeed any changes which did not strike at the very foundations of society and government. Nevertheless, it has been assumed by portions of the English press, and sometimes by our own, and is now believed by many in this country, that the efforts of the Nihilists to murder and destroy are to obtain relief from an oppressive government, and that a large part of the population of Russia is subjected, by the tyranny and exactions of a despotic, cruel, and irresponsible authority, to great and almost unendurable hardship and suffering. Persons thus believing assign to the Nihilists and to their assassinations a national and even patriotic purpose, and are inclined for that reason to justify the most atrocious means for the end supposed to be sought. It is the purpose of the Nihilists to create this impression, and, by the aid of a portion of the English press not unwilling to circulate statements calculated to injure the Russian Government and nation in the esteem of the world, this end has been to some extent attained—a result which would be of less consequence if the impression had not penetrated the minds of our own citizens—greatly to the injustice of a Government whose rule at home and influence abroad have long been marked by wise and honorable statesmanship, and generally by an enlarged benevolence, especially toward the oppressed Christian populations of Europe.

It is not perhaps remarkable that England should regard Russia with distrust and dislike. She believes it has long been the imperial purpose to occupy India. Wise and liberal English statesmen do not, I think, share this apprehension, nor do those who have means of learning the real purposes of the Russian Emperor. He would fail to find in India that source of revenue which, under the most grinding and oppressive taxation ever adopted, except perhaps in Egypt, enables the British Government to draw annually from a starving population some sixty-five millions sterling, more than eighteen millions of which is expended in England for the administration there of the Indian Government, and in paying pensions, annuities, interest, etc. This vast revenue has been obtained, among other sources, by a tax of between six and seven millions sterling—some thirty-three million dollars—upon salt, an article of prime necessity for both poor and rich in a hot climate, and by a tax upon such incomes as amount to seventy-five cents per week. The Government which rules this people of one hun-

dred and eighty or ninety millions by a viceroy and his council, without the least native representation, has found it necessary to employ an army at an annual expense to the ruled of from seventeen to more than twenty-five millions sterling—a sum in excess of the cost of the entire military establishment of Russia. The numerous colonies and dependencies of the British Empire, India excepted, are governed at an aggregate cost somewhat exceeding the revenues received ; but the unhappy and famine-stricken populations of that country contribute by taxation largely to the national and individual incomes of the English people, who, by superior strength and military resources, maintain in poverty and wretchedness that vast inheritance of human beings which Warren Hastings and others conquered for England by an infamy of cruelties which the eloquence of Burke has made immortal. This inheritance Russia does not covet, nor would she hold it by a taxation which bares and bleaches the very bones of a people taught by their religion to bow submissively to a fate which makes their journey from the cradle to the grave a pilgrimage of hopeless toil, suffering, and starvation. Not only does the tax-gatherer seize all except what he deems barely enough to sustain life, but the Government is constantly increasing the burdens of its victims by enlarging the debt of India, which from 1869 to 1878 was increased more than fifty millions sterling. How the load of taxation is to be borne necessary to meet increasing interest charged upon this doomed race surpassed even the ingenuity of the late Ministry, for it was admitted, by the pliant instruments which obeyed the nod and worked the will of Lord Beaconsfield in India, that every resource of the ghastly and swarming millions of that ancient land which greed and avarice could discover had already been levied upon to support a government in comparison with which that of their dethroned princes was humane and merciful. Hence the two or three millions sterling contributed by Indian taxation and pledged as a famine fund were seized by the fallen Ministry to pay the expenses of a war waged to establish a “scientific frontier”—a wickedness which, without accomplishing its purpose, has dethroned a rightful ruler and destroyed thousands of his people.

What I have said of the oppressive taxation of India is founded upon the statements of English officials and English writers, some of whom have denounced the rule of Great Britain as more intolerable than that which prevailed before the atrocities of Hastings planted a Christian flag upon pagan soil. The constant fear

that Russia intends to seize India leads England to imagine that every march of Russian troops to a Russian outpost in Asia is a threat to invade India. It is an idle fear, and yet it is this and the equally groundless apprehension that Russia designs to occupy Constantinople which have led to the bolstering of Turkey by Great Britain; have made the massacre of tens of thousands of Bulgarian and Greek Christians by the Turks possible; and, finally, made it necessary for Russia, in the interests of humanity, single-handed, at the sacrifice of many thousands of lives and millions of treasure, to substantially destroy a power which for generations had been the scourge and the curse of Europe. It is a mistake to suppose that this war was waged for purposes of conquest. It was forced upon the Emperor by the religious sentiment of his people, long outraged by atrocities committed upon their Christian neighbors the Bulgarians too horrible to describe; and, when war was finally declared, it was but the cry of the Russian nation for vengeance upon great offenders against the human race. And so impressed were the English people by these horrors, that their Government was compelled to stand with folded arms and witness the chastisement of its ancient ally, while the rest of Europe looked on with approval. I know the reluctance with which the Emperor engaged in this contest, and have high authority for saying that it was long postponed, in the hope that such joint action of the great powers would be taken as would force the Turk to stay his indiscriminate butchery of women, children, and unarmed men. England refused to unite for this purpose; the Czar declared war, and then moved upon the enemies of the Christian race. They were finally conquered, and the flag of the victors, after many battles, waved at the gates of Constantinople. These might have been entered without firing a shot or the loss of a man, but the Emperor, conscious that the power of the Turk in Europe was annihilated, stayed the march of his columns at San Stefano, and there dictated terms of peace. These were embodied in the treaty bearing that name, and this was submitted to the Congress of Berlin, where it underwent many changes, the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield being to reduce within as narrow territorial limits as possible that freedom which Europe was to guarantee to the Bulgarians; and it was the boast of this representative of a Christian power, when the labors of that Congress ended, that the area of civil and religious freedom prescribed by Russia in the Treaty of San Stefano had by that of Berlin been vastly circumscribed. The chief tenderness

displayed by Lord Beaconsfield in the Congress was for the Jews, while his greatest solicitude was for the Turk, who was to guard the gates of the East against the march of Russia.

I have never doubted that the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield would be condemned by the British people, but I had not supposed he would give them the opportunity to do so until Parliament should approve of all he had done, for I deemed him too astute to exchange a certainty for an uncertainty, and not at all confident that dramatic displays upon the vast theatre he occupied would be accepted at the polls for wise statesmanship. He did not disappoint expectation, but held his Parliament firmly in hand until it had entered its seventh and last year of constitutional life ; and, as it was about expiring, he so dissolved it as to maintain his well-earned reputation for startling surprises, for his purpose was concealed, not only from his political antagonists, but from some of his inferior followers. If his object was to rout his adversaries, by a sudden manœuvre, before they could unite their forces for the fray, he has been disappointed ; for, under great, eloquent, and skillful leaders, they were so marshaled as to pronounce, by an overwhelming majority, a condemnation of his Ministry as decisive and withering as any ever before recorded by the deliberate judgment of the British people.

This policy has imposed heavy burdens upon the English nation. A legacy of troubles, involving the wisest statesmanship to compose, has been devolved upon the new Ministry, and a load of taxation, which no budget can evade or conceal, must be proposed, to meet obligations which the Government is pledged to perform. It will greatly embarrass Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues to deal with some of the problems they must solve. Treaties made by their predecessors they must observe, and these, if faithfully executed, demand great sacrifices. Thus, the Treaty of Berlin and the secret treaty conveying Cyprus, in some of their provisions, are not only hostile to the views of the new Ministry, but highly detrimental to the solid and permanent interests of Great Britain ; and yet these provisions must be executed so long as the treaties are substantially observed by the Porte. Mr. Gladstone, for instance, is an earnest Christian statesman, who appreciates the stupendous mistake committed by his predecessors in forcing at Berlin the yoke of the Turk upon the Bulgarian Christians after Russia had removed it in the field, and by treaty at San Stefano. He knows, too, the grave mistake committed in not conciliating that people instead of making

them feel that the Russians, not the English, were their friends, for it is probably their mission to possess and hold Constantinople and the straits as the trustee of nations—a position no first-rate power would be willing to occupy.

The gratitude the Greeks owe to Russia is of much the same character, for they, too, owe their national independence substantially to her assistance. British statesmen, at Berlin, might have secured the gratitude of both Greeks and Bulgarians by a simple recognition of their well-founded claims ; but Lord Beaconsfield, unable to realize that the Turk was doomed, by the forces of a civilization he could not resist, to speedy decay in Europe, sought to preserve the outer shell of a rotten empire. He failed to see that this supposed bulwark against the imaginary march of Russia eastward would be worse than useless if the bulwark itself must be propped and sustained by the power of England. It remains for Mr. Gladstone and the liberal-minded statesmen he has called about him to coöperate with the powers represented at Berlin in doing justice to both Greeks and Bulgarians, by yielding, to the former, geographical limitations prescribed in the Treaty of Berlin, and, to the latter, that liberty from Turkish oppressions—south as well as north of the Balkans—which it was the glory of the representatives of Christian England to curtail. It was, on the contrary, the glory of Prince Gortchakoff that he in the Congress endeavored to give the Bulgarians a territory comprehending their entire nationality, and to the Greeks their enlarged boundaries ; and before his departure for the Congress, when the question was suggested whether the Greeks could be properly represented there he said, if not represented, they could surely be heard, to press their claims ; and in that connection he more than once declared with emphasis, “I will be the advocate of the Greeks in the Congress.”

When telegrams were received announcing that this aged and venerated statesman was sick unto death, I had faith that he would live to rejoice with the Christian world over the victory of the Liberals in Great Britain ; and it would not much surprise me should he survive long enough to agree with their Ministry upon an Eastern policy of such breadth and wisdom as to remove the fears which continually haunt the English mind that Russia designs to invade India, or at least to occupy Constantinople. This accomplished, and harmonious relations would soon exist between the peoples of both nations. England is strong enough to hold her empire against all but the explosion of internal forces, and she would better display

this strength by a calm and unruffled front than by a constant nervous agitation—the usual-expression of weakness and fear.

I have at greater length than I had intended presented facts to show the deep interest which in our day Russia has taken in the welfare of the suffering Christians of the Turkish Empire, and how much she has sacrificed to promote this welfare. It may be said that the motive of the Emperor in so doing was to weaken and finally to destroy his ancient enemy, and not to benefit the oppressed. This is a cheap if not cowardly criticism, and is generally urged by those destitute of the virtues of generosity and benevolence, who would excuse their absence by denouncing them as ambition and avarice when exercised by others.

It is remarkable that the sympathy heretofore extended by Russia to the Greek nation existed in 1778 in the mind of the Empress Catharine. The English Minister then at her court was Mr. Harris, afterward Earl of Malmesbury, whose grandson edited his diaries and correspondence, to which I shall refer. He was sent to Russia during our Revolutionary war, for the purpose of negotiating an alliance offensive and defensive between that power and Great Britain—one object being to secure aid against France, that England might turn a sufficient force upon her American colonies to crush their rebellion. He struggled long and earnestly to accomplish this ; and finally, when these efforts failed, he attempted, by means of a bribe offered to the Empress by authority of his Government, to induce her, while acting as mediatrix, to promote peace between the contending parties—a position demanding the utmost impartiality—so to conclude it as to make the withdrawal of the French fleets and armies from the American colonies a condition, that Great Britain, thus relieved from her Continental antagonists France and Spain, might the more easily reduce her colonies to subjection.

Mr. Harris was not fortunate in his attempt to accomplish this alliance, and in June, 1779, he writes to his Government in a despondent tone :

I am fully satisfied, as well from what I hear as from my own experience, that we have nothing to expect from this court in the common course of negotiation. The leading men here are too rich for corruption, too headstrong to be persuaded, and too ignorant to listen to plain truth and conviction. . . . The present reigning idea—and it carries away all others—is the establishing a new empire in the East, at Athens or Constantinople. The Empress discoursed a long while with me the other day on the ancient Greeks ;

of their alacrity and the superiority of their genius, and the same character being still extant in the modern ones, and of the possibility of their again becoming the first people if properly assisted and seconded. She told me she talked this language to me, as she knew my father was an admirer of the Greeks, and that she hoped I inherited his predilection. I mention this, my lord, not for the sake of repeating with ostentation the marks of distinction with which she honors me, but with a view of hinting to your lordship that, if his Majesty (the King of Great Britain) should stand in indispensable need of assistance from this quarter, the only means of obtaining it is by encouraging this romantic idea. She is so warmly bent on it that such a conduct dexterously managed would give us the firmest hold of this court: *and as its execution, whenever seriously planned, would instantly appear impracticable*, we need not be apprehensive of having engaged ourselves too far in an unpleasant transaction. Having suggested thus much, your lordship will improve on it as in your better judgment you should think proper. I must only entreat your lordship to consider it as written in the greatest confidence, and submitted as a proof of my zeal, not to be employed uselessly.

It is not difficult to understand why an intelligent man, giving utterance to sentiments so base, should have been anxious to conceal them from all but the person to whom they were addressed. The leading men were too rich to be bribed, and too obstinate to be persuaded by the arguments of Mr. Harris ; but he discovered that the Empress was filled with the noble desire to relieve the suffering Greeks from the cruelties they had for generations suffered under the rule of the Turk—believing that, if properly assisted and seconded, they would resume their old rank among the nations of the earth. He therefore suggested that, should aid from Russia become indispensable, it might be obtained, and France and Spain be defied and the colonists humbled, by humoring this grand scheme of Greek emancipation and independence, and pretending to unite with the Empress for its accomplishment ; and this method of securing assistance, he suggested, would be cheap, for it would only be necessary, when she should demand the promised aid for the Greeks, to refuse it upon the ground that her purpose was not only romantic but impracticable. It is to be regretted that such insincerity has too frequently marked the conduct of Great Britain toward the Greeks from that time to the present ; and, although it is quite generally assumed that Greek independence is largely due to her efforts, this is a grave mistake, for the Greeks owe this mainly to the friendship, services, and sacrifices of Russia. This can be established by a few brief statements. In 1827, when Canning was Prime Minister, a treaty was concluded between Russia, Great Brit-

ain, and France, by which they undertook to relieve the Greeks by force, if necessary, from the shocking misgovernment of the Turk, and especially to prevent a continuance of outrages which the helpless Greeks of all ages and both sexes had for generations suffered. It had been the policy of the English Government to uphold the Turk and resist all efforts to dismember his empire, or reduce his power ; but Canning was not only a statesman of a high order, but full of love for his race and anxious to relieve it from tyranny in all forms. He therefore cordially united in the treaty I have mentioned, warmly sympathizing with that oppressed people. Unfortunately for them, Canning died shortly after the treaty was signed, and was very soon succeeded as Prime Minister by the Duke of Wellington, who almost immediately cast about, as his published letters show, for some pretext on which to evade or abandon it, insisting, with asuspicion which has become hereditary in the English mind, that the purpose of the Russian ruler was, not to help the Greeks, but to aggrandize his empire. In October, 1827, and during Lord Goderich's brief administration which immediately preceded that of the Duke, the battle of Navarino was fought, in which the entire fleet of Turkey and Egypt was destroyed by the combined fleets of Russia, France, and England. This victory, which has been commonly attributed to the English, was the result of an engagement brought on by accident rather than design—the purpose of the three admirals commanding the combined fleet being to induce the Turkish commander, Ibrahim Pasha, to discontinue the war of extermination he had long conducted against the Greeks, and which, by treaty, the three powers had engaged to terminate—it being supposed the Porte would, without contest, yield to the superior force thus united for that purpose. It was understood, however, that actual force was not to be employed until absolutely necessary to accomplish the purpose of the treaty and of the secret article appended thereto. When, therefore, the combined fleets entered the Greek waters, and arrayed themselves in front of the Turkish and Egyptian ships without intending an attack, shots were discharged by the latter, which soon brought on a general engagement, resulting in the utter destruction of their entire fleet. On the 29th of January, 1828, Parliament assembled, and the King's speech, alluding to this, stated : “His Majesty deeply laments that this conflict should have occurred with the naval force of an ancient ally ; but he still entertains the hope that this untoward event will not be followed by further hostilities,” etc. The use of this lan-

guage gave rise to a most violent debate on the motion to adopt the address from the throne, in the course of which the ablest men on both sides participated. It was denied that the Turk had been the ancient ally of England ; and the language employed by Mr. Burke was quoted by Lord Holland to show that the Turkish Empire was unworthy a place in the European system.

"I have never before heard it held forth," said Burke, "that the Turkish Empire has ever been considered as any part of the balance of power in Europe. They despise and condemn all Christian princes as infidels, and only wish to subdue and exterminate them and their people. What have these worse than savages to do with the powers of Europe, but to spread war, destruction, and pestilence among them? The ministers and the policy which shall give these people any weight in Europe will deserve all the bans and curses of posterity. All that is holy in religion, all that is moral and humane, demands an abhorrence of everything which tends to extend the power of that cruel and wasteful empire. Any Christian power is to be preferred to these destructive savages."

In the House of Commons, Mr. Brougham said that "he wished at once to record his dissent from that paragraph of the speech which designated the affair of Navarino as an occurrence to be lamented, but which he would term a glorious, brilliant, decisive, and immortal achievement. It has been reserved," he said, "for some of the men of these times to triumph and to be afraid—to conquer and to repine—to fight as heroes did the contest of freedom, and still to tremble like slaves—to act gloriously and repine bitterly—to win by brave men the battle of liberty in the East, and, in the West, to pluck from the valiant brow the laurels which it had so nobly earned, and plant the cypress in their stead because the conqueror had fought for religion and liberty."

The Duke of Wellington, who soon after became Prime Minister, maintained that the epithets in the royal speech which had excited such disapprobation and comment were in both instances fairly and truly applicable ; that the Ottoman Empire had long been an ally of his country ; that the Ottoman power was an essential part of the balance of power in Europe ; and that its preservation had been for a considerable number of years an object not only to this country, but to the whole of Europe.

These views he stubbornly maintained after he became Prime Minister, and, as his published correspondence shows, resolved not to

execute the treaty entered into between the three powers for the protection of the oppressed Greeks—declaring that the purpose of the Russian Emperor in so doing was not to benefit that down-trodden race, but in some manner to aggrandize and benefit himself—how or in what respect he did not explain ; nor was it possible that either power could, in executing that treaty, which did not stipulate for Greek independence, acquire territory or the least selfish advantage, its sole object being to compel the Turks to cease their massacres of a defenseless people.

That of which the Empress Catharine talked and dreamed, but was unable to achieve, her grandson Nicholas accomplished, by extorting from the unwilling but conquered Porte recognition of Greek independence by the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829. After exhausting all peaceful means, he in April, 1828, declared war against the Turks, and after many hard-fought battles their armies were defeated, and Adrianople was occupied by Russian troops ; when the Sultan, fearing his powerful enemy would march upon Constantinople, sued for peace, which was granted upon condition that he should acknowledge the independence of Greece ; and thus, after the lapse of many centuries, the Greeks, by the aid of Russia, again assumed a place among the nations of the earth. For this inestimable service the Emperor required of them no compensation—no advantages. The event was hailed with approval by all nations and governments except that of Great Britain, which frowned upon the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire. It was fortunate for the Greeks that Great Britain was not permitted to interfere in the formation of this treaty, for they would not have been more fairly treated by Wellington in 1829 than they were a half-century later by Lord Beaconsfield, who discouraged them from uniting with Russia in her late war upon the Turks by the promise that, if they remained neutral, their interests should be better served than they could be by joining the Russian armies. Greece believed this, and has since had abundant cause to repent her confidence, for, at the Congress of Berlin, Lord Beaconsfield strongly objected even to recommending Turkey to grant any definite extension of Greek boundaries ; and, when against his opposition these were fixed, he has ever since declined, upon different pretexts, to unite with the powers of Europe in demanding of the Sultan performance of this condition.

I now recur to the just and generous conduct displayed toward us by the Empress Catharine during our Revolutionary struggle—

a conduct repeated by her imperial descendant, now upon the throne, during the dark hours of our civil contest.

To resist France, Great Britain had been compelled to employ most of her naval and military power, instead of turning it upon and crushing the colonists. The war between these powers seriously disturbed the peace and prosperity of Europe, and greatly interfered with its commerce, toward which the armed ships of Great Britain adopted an oppressive and unjust policy, stopping, searching, and seizing vessels, and claiming the right to consider as contraband of war some of the most important products of northern Europe. This led the Empress to project, about the close of the year 1778, the treaty of the armed neutrality, designed by the states joining it to resist the maritime outrages to which their commerce was thus subjected. The personal character of the Empress was such as gave her great influence over the northern courts, and also that of Vienna; and, the attitude of France being such as to make the Government of Great Britain extremely anxious to form an offensive and defensive alliance with Russia, Mr. Harris, in January, 1778, was, as before stated, especially instructed to obtain such a treaty, if possible. He had been told early in April, 1778, soon after his arrival in St. Petersburg, that the French Court had agreed to acknowledge the independence of the Americans, which, he says, filled him with indignation, and he declared, in a letter written in May of that year, that "the conduct of the Court of Versailles from the first period of our American contest has been fraught with duplicity, baseness, and low cunning"; and he added: "I have endeavored to make them see it in that light here, but have only succeeded in drawing from the Empress a civil answer and lukewarm expressions of friendship. I wish I could promise myself any hopes of succeeding in making her fulfill even these lukewarm expressions; but I find her character so different from what I was told it was, and her good-will toward us so changed, that it will require, I believe, my greatest efforts to prevent her doing harm instead of prevailing on her to do us good."

And in a previous letter, written in April, he says, "If they" (the Empress and her ministers) "should desert us in the hour of trial, I flatter myself no imputation of neglect will be laid to my charge."

It was indeed an hour of trial for Great Britain. While endeavoring to conquer to absolute subjection her American colonies, France had appeared as their champion, and England was thus con-

fronted by one of the most powerful nations of Europe. To subjugate her colonies was no easy task, but to do this, and carry on a European war of magnitude, would require the straining of every nerve unless powerful aid could be secured ; and, to get this, Great Britain was ready to humble herself in the person of her representative before the Empress, who was implored to enter into the proposed alliance. That accomplished, France would be checkmated, and to crush the rebellious Americans would then be, it was supposed, comparatively easy.

About the middle of May Mr. Harris writes, "There is no disposition here to agree to our alliance even on any terms" ; and he in the same month again writes, "The friendship of this country partakes of its climate—a clear, brilliant sky, with a cold, freezing atmosphere."

In November, 1778, he was still endeavoring to form this alliance, and declared it to be his purpose to obtain a personal interview with the Empress on the subject, as he doubted if his views reached her through her ministers. This audience he did not, however, obtain until September, 1779, when he urged her to make a strong and spirited declaration to the Courts of Versailles and Madrid—Spain having at that time united with France in the contest—and to support that declaration by an immediate considerable naval armament. She declined this proposal, and hinted, says Mr. Harris, "*at our being able to restore peace by renouncing our struggle with the colonies.*"

This interview seems to have discouraged him in his efforts to secure the coveted alliance, and his failure with her and with those who were, as he had said, "too rich to be bribed and too obstinate to be convinced," seems to have worked a change in his estimate of their characters and purposes. In June, 1779, he had praised the Empress as a great adept in English gardening, and added that, from conversing on this subject, "we got to Blackstone, where she soon led me out of my depth, as I believe she would many a circuiter, being most perfectly mistress of our laws and constitution."

Writing in January, 1778, he says : "Prepared even as I was for the magnificence and parade of this court, yet it exceeds in everything my ideas ; to this is joined the most perfect order and decorum. The Empress herself unites in the most wonderful manner the talent of putting those she honors with her confidence at their ease, and of keeping up her own dignity. Her character extends throughout her whole administration, and, although she is rigidly

obeyed, yet she has introduced a lenity in the mode of government to which, till her reign, this country was a stranger."

This estimate, formed with sufficient deliberation, he afterward exchanged for one very discreditable to them all, when he discovered that his mission was profitless and his efforts to secure aid from the Empress hopeless. His Government was greatly alarmed at the project of the armed neutrality, and through him proposed to the Empress that, if she would abandon it, secret instructions should be given to all British men-of-war not to stop or search Russian vessels; but she, with the same romantic ideas as to fairness and justice which had surprised Mr. Harris when she spoke of the Greeks, was so impressed with a sense of duty toward sister nations who had trusted her as their ally, that she declined a proposal which was to benefit her commerce at their expense. She might, indeed, have largely increased her own by accepting the bait, for her flag would have safely covered all cargoes carried under it, at a period when that of Great Britain was the scourge of the seas.

Finally, the efforts of Mr. Harris having utterly failed to induce the Empress to join an alliance which would have involved her in war with France and Spain, she, at the request of those powers and of Great Britain, consented to act as mediatrix with the Emperor of Austria, for the purpose of composing Europe by establishing a peace between the contending powers. She was, of course, bound to act toward the three Powers with entire justice and impartiality, and yet, when it was understood that she would accept the position, another and most extraordinary (not to say disgraceful) effort was made by the Government of Great Britain, through Mr. Harris, to induce her to violate the duty she was to perform, the circumstances of which I shall briefly state.

In the course of conversation between Prince Potemkin, one of the Ministers of the Empress, and Mr. Harris, it was suggested that, if she could effect a peace to the satisfaction of his Government, it might be induced to cede to her, in consideration of the service, the Island of Minorca, the transaction to be kept a profound secret from France until peace should be secured, as possession by Russia of that island would place enmity between the two nations; and, of course, with a knowledge by France of the bribe, she would decline to accept the Empress as mediatrix. Considerable correspondence upon this subject transpired between Mr. Harris and his Government, when, finally, Lord Stormont, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the 20th of January, 1781, during a very dark pe-

riod of our Revolutionary war, wrote to his Minister that "his Majesty, after taking the opinion of his confidential servants, has empowered me to authorize you to mention the conditions upon which alone so great and important a cession can be made :

"The Empress of Russia shall effectuate the restoration of peace between Great Britain, France, and Spain upon the following terms, viz. : The Treaty of Paris, in 1762, shall be the basis of the treaty to be made. It shall be renewed with such alterations only respecting the possessions of the contracting parties as the events of the war have made. . . . It shall be an express condition that the French immediately evacuate Rhode Island, and every other part of his Majesty's colonies in North America. No stipulation or agreement whatever shall be made with respect to his Majesty's rebellious subjects, *who can never be suffered to treat through the medium of a foreign power.* If the Empress of Russia will effect such a peace as is here described, the King will in that case cede to her Imperial Majesty, and to the imperial crown of Russia, the Island of Minorca ; this cession to take place as soon as possible after the preliminaries of the above-described peace are signed.

"Though the cession must be conditional, and can not be made till after the service is performed, yet the effectual engagement may be entered into immediately, but must for many reasons be kept absolutely secret for the present."

The Empress was extremely anxious to secure possession of an island in the Mediterranean where her fleets could have been moored and her naval power increased, and Minorca she would have regarded as of inestimable value. The service she was to perform in return was almost as easy as lying, for she was only to violate her duty by securing a peace which her great influence and supposed impartiality could, it was believed, accomplish—being careful to conceal that she was so doing for a bribe, which would put lasting enmity between her empire and that of France, the power trusting in her impartiality and justice. And this service was proposed through a minister who stated, in a communication to his Government, that he had declared to one of the advisers of the Empress that, should the King of Prussia be joined in the mediation, "we could no longer consider it as an impartial one," although it was not suggested that the Great Frederick had been bribed, or was likely to be, by the French King.

I need not suggest, what is quite apparent, that the answer of the Empress to this proposal might have been the turning-point in

our Revolutionary war ; for, with peace between France, Spain, and England, and the French fleets and armies withdrawn from us, and our forefathers interdicted from communicating with Great Britain through any foreign power, they would have been isolated, unsupported, and, if not crushed, would have been forced to sacrifice many more of their precious lives, with a postponement of their independence for a generation.

The Empress declined this proposition—declared that she “would not be led into temptation,” and answered it by the following communication, written in her own hand :

“Her Imperial Majesty is extremely sensible of the friendly offer the Court of London has made her : she has already said, and, again repeats, that she shall be most happy to contribute for Great Britain a just and honorable peace ; that she will work strenuously with her colleague to effect this end ; and, if she should be fortunate enough to succeed, she then with the greatest pleasure will enter into the closest connection with England, and cement this connection by any means the most likely to render it useful, sincere, and lasting. As long, however, as she is employed as mediatrix, his Britannic Majesty must be sensible she can not, with any propriety, enter even into an eventual convention with him ; since, as the object of this convention must sooner or later transpire, it will appear on some future day as if she had, during the mediation, been influenced by one of the belligerent powers, and her impartiality and justice might be called in question.”

This answer, polite as became the great monarch who wrote it, conveyed a reproach which should have been felt even by the King and his ministers to whom it was communicated. It seems to have been the last attempt of Mr. Harris to influence the Empress by negotiation or bribery ; and when Mr. Fox, for whom she entertained a great admiration, became Prime Minister, and the hostile policy of Lord North toward the American colonies was succeeded by one friendly and conciliatory, Mr. Harris found that he was treated with greater kindness than formerly by the Empress, whose sympathies were with the Americans, and with the new administration which favored their independence. It was soon after his failures in these not very creditable efforts in diplomacy that Mr. Harris requested to be recalled, and in this connection his grandson with great simplicity records in the diary :

“The evident hopelessness of obtaining an effective alliance with Russia, and the corrupt transactions in which Sir James Harris

was unavoidably involved at this court, where honesty, truth, and decency were openly disregarded, had completely disgusted him with his office."

It would seem that honesty, truth, and decency were there too highly regarded to suit the purposes of this Minister or his Government; and these qualities, notwithstanding the misrepresentations of British diplomatists and historians, and the slanders of the English press, have been substantially exemplified in the relations of Russia with other nations from that period until the present. I shall here, perhaps, be met with the vulgar cry of the partition of Poland, which occurred about a century ago, and has, with an industry and mendacity unparalleled in history, been so generally attributed to Russian intrigue and wickedness that, with few exceptions, the English-speaking race believe that Russia is alone responsible for what has been denounced as the most atrocious robbery of national life recorded in the annals of mankind. This has been taught in the common schools of our country, declaimed in lecture-rooms, elaborated by the novelist in many dramatic forms, and solemnly taught in churches, until the very mention of Poland suggests a once grand republic, peopled by a noble, liberty-loving, patriotic race, blotted out of the firmament of nations by the cruelty, ambition, and greed of a Russian despot. No picture of the past more false and unreal than this was ever presented.

The partition was first projected by the King of Prussia, who had long wished to acquire Polish or western Prussia, which lay between his German dominions and eastern Prussia, and hence at the will of the Poles cut off all communication between these portions of his kingdom. In 1769, while Poland was torn by civil commotions and desolated by the plague, under pretense of forming lines to prevent its spread, he occupied the whole of Polish Prussia with his troops. He knew that to hold this territory he must have the consent of Russia and Austria, and this led him to plan the partition of Poland among the three powers. He in 1769 or 1770 secured the ready concurrence of Austria, but found the Empress Catharine indisposed to agree to it. She was then engaged in a war with the Turks, and to secure her acquiescence the King sent his brother to St. Petersburg, who informed the Empress that Austria was forming an alliance with the Porte, which, should it take place, would create a most formidable combination against her, but that the friendship of the Emperor could be secured by assenting to the partition, upon which condition he would renounce his con-

nection with the Turk, and suffer the Russians to prosecute the war against him without interruption. Catharine, dreading the interference of the Emperor, and perceiving from the close relations existing between the Courts of Austria and Berlin that it would not be in her power to prevent the intended partition, assented to it, and the treaty for that purpose was executed by the three powers in February, 1772.

I have taken this account of the circumstances under which the partition was projected and planned, and the threat under which the assent of Catharine was obtained, from authentic English sources, which in the same connection assert that the British Government remonstrated against it. This is utterly untrue. When the representatives of the three powers informed that Government of the purpose to dismember Poland, the answer of the Earl of Suffolk, in the name of the King of Great Britain, was :

“The King may well suppose that the three powers are convinced of the justice of their respective pretensions, though his Majesty is not informed of the motives of their conduct.”

This answer conveyed acquiescence, not remonstrance or protest ; and, indeed, as will be presently shown from reliable sources, the nature of the case demanded neither, for, of all the accursed governments that ever existed on earth, that of Poland, from 1572 to 1772, was the worst, the most intolerable and oppressive : and this was so well known at the latter period throughout Europe that every just and humane ruler felt that any change of government must be a relief, to the wretched slaves who constituted the bulk of the Polish population, from the cruel and irresponsible rule of the nobles. I have space for but a few facts in justification of this statement, and these I shall take from impartial and reliable sources.

At the death, in 1572, of Sigismund Augustus, the last of the race of hereditary Polish kings, the nobles—between one hundred and fifty and two hundred thousand in number—formed a constitution, exclusively for their own benefit, which did not even notice the existence of the great mass of the miserable people who were slaves, in which it was provided that the nobles should pay no taxes, should have power of life and death over their vassals, should hold all offices—civil, military, and ecclesiastical—and in choosing their King should lay him under any restrictions they pleased. His election by this vast mass of electors was in the open field where they assembled armed, and here for two hundred years—from 1572 until the partition—they met ready to sell themselves to the high-

est bidder at the Court of Austria, France, Saxony, Sweden, or Brandenburg, and, as may be supposed, during that entire period one universal scene of corruption, faction, and confusion reigned—so that, as was said by a celebrated historian, “A Polish royal election was nothing more than a double auction of the throne.” Almost every election was the signal for a civil war, usually lasting during the greater portion of the next reign, so that for the entire period of two hundred years, from the first election to the partition, Poland was the “constant scene of anarchy, and its attendant miseries—fire, bloodshed, and famine.” And, as has been said by an able and eloquent English writer, Mr. Cobden: “There is nothing in the history of the world comparable for confusion, suffering, and wickedness, to the condition of this unhappy kingdom during these two centuries. . . . It was a despotism one hundred thousand times worse than that of Turkey, because it gave to one hundred thousand tyrants absolute power over the lives of the rest of the community. The annals of republican Poland, previously to its dismemberment, are nothing but a history of anarchy.”

The historian who recounts the miseries showered upon the millions of slaves during this career of sacrilege and rapine—for religious fanaticism armed itself with torture and the sword—exclaims, “Oh that some strong despot would come and in mercy rescue these people from themselves!”

The wise reform, says an able historian, Herren, “that gave to Russia, at the hands of Peter the Great, the seeds of a power which has since grown to such greatness, and which, if adopted by Poland, would have, in all probability, conducted her to a similar state of prosperity, were absolutely rejected by the profligate nobles, because they must necessarily have involved some amelioration of the fate of the people.”

What the partition has accomplished for that portion of Poland which came under the rule of Russia may be stated in the language of Mr. Cobden, an eminent liberal, who will certainly not be accused of an undue partiality toward a despotic government:

“Slavery,” says he, “no more exists in Poland; the peasant that tills the soil no longer ranks on a level with the oxen that draw his plow; he can neither be murdered nor maimed at the caprice of an insolent owner, but is as safe in life and limb under the present laws of Poland as are the laborers of Sussex or Kent. The modern husbandman is not restricted to mere personal freedom; he enjoys the right to possess property of all kinds—not even ex-

cepting land—against which the nobles of ancient *republican* Poland opposed insuperable prohibitions. In a word, the peasantry of Poland now possess the control over their own persons and fortunes, and are at liberty to pursue happiness according to their own free will and pleasure.”

Referring to the “Cabinet Cyclopædia—History of Poland”—a faithful compendium, we find that after the partition Russian Poland “had continued to improve beyond all precedent ; at no former period of her history was the public wealth so great or so generally diffused : bridges and public roads constructed at an enormous expense—frequently at the cost of the Czar’s treasury ; the multitude of new habitations remarkable for a neatness and a regard to domestic comfort never before observed ; the embellishments introduced into the buildings not merely of the rich but of the tradesmen and mechanics ; the encouragement afforded and eagerly afforded by the Government to every useful branch of industry ; the progress made by agriculture, in particular the foundation of Polish prosperity ; the accumulation on all sides of national and individual wealth ; and, above all, the happy countenances of the inferior classes of society—exhibited a wonderful contrast to what had lately been. The most immense of markets, Russia—a market all but closed to the rest of Europe—afforded constant activity to the manufacturer. To prove this astonishing progress from deplorable, hopeless poverty to successful enterprise, let one fact suffice. In 1815 there were scarcely one hundred looms for coarse woollen cloths ; at the commencement of the insurrection of 1830 there were six thousand.”

That insurrection, instigated by the nobles for the purpose of regaining control over the nation they had so long oppressed, was put down by Russia, and in the order issued to the troops to quell it they were required, under severe penalties, to respect the houses and property of the Polish peasants.

I have shown upon the best authority that the partition of Poland was not conceived or planned by Russia ; that she was induced to engage in it under the threat and belief that, if she did not, Austria would join her ancient foe, Turkey, in making war upon her people ; that, at the time of the transaction, Great Britain officially declared to the world that it might well be supposed the three partitioning powers were convinced of the justice of their respective pretensions ; and it also appears that the people of that portion of Poland transferred to Russia have been vastly benefited by her rule. In view

of this, is it not time that the virtuous indignation hurled against Russia by the ignorant, the prejudiced, and the malicious, for her participation in that transaction, should cease? Should any one call in question the facts I have stated in her justification, they will be sustained by authorities which the ignorant and the prejudiced rarely consult, but which even the malicious will hardly venture to deny.

At a subsequent time I may take occasion to present somewhat in detail the actual condition of the Russian people since the emancipation of the serfs, together with some account of their institutions and laws. It is hardly necessary to say, however, that a government which has shown so deep and so abiding an interest in the Christian populations of other lands would not fail to manifest the utmost solicitude for the welfare of its own people ; nor need I suggest that a sovereign, under whose direction a representative government was established upon the borders of his empire, in Bulgaria, before his troops ceased to occupy that country, is quite certain not only to be favorable to such an institution at home, but to adopt it so soon as his people are fit to choose their representatives. He is kind, wise, brave, and humane ; beloved by his people, who are contented with a rule which has given them freedom, the ownership of the land they but a short time since cultivated as serfs, with the solid promise of a future marked by constantly increasing education and national prosperity.

I venture to close with the suggestion that, if we thoroughly study the history of the Russian Empire for the last hundred years, and compare it with that of any other European power, we shall find that its Government has surpassed all others in the sacrifices it has made in men and treasure to aid oppressed Christian nationalities in freeing themselves from tyranny and bondage ; and, if we consider the conduct of the great Empress in our struggle for independence, and the sympathy shown us by her imperial descendant in our late struggle to hold the heritage received from our fathers, we must conclude that Russian sympathy is earnest and heart-felt, and not the mere offspring of Russian interests.

E. W. STOUGHTON.